



March 5, 2014

TO: Sen. Ed Meyer and Rep. Linda Gentile, Chairmen, and Members of the Committee on the Environment

**RE: Public Hearing on HB 5419, AAC the Preservation of the Savin Farm in Lebanon**

The Southbury Land Trust strongly urges passage of HB 5419, which will preserve one of the few remaining large farm properties in Connecticut. The 575A Savin Farm was second only to the Southbury Training School farmland prioritized for protection in 2010 by the Farmland Preservation Advisory Board. As was the case with the Training School property, the Savin Farm has significant acreage classified as prime and important farmland soils and is therefore a key to the future of agriculture in Connecticut.

The farm is adjacent to several preserved properties along the Yantic River and has significant value for its natural resources and recreational uses as well.

As was the case with last year's Southbury legislation, this bill would provide for permanent protection by means of a conservation easement granted to a nonprofit organization which will insure that the land will be used for agricultural purposes in perpetuity.

This bill helps achieve a goal stated in the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut which is "...to maintain and support the viability of the agricultural sector to increase a long-term, in-state food producing capacity... through conservation and preservation of prime agricultural lands."

For the past few decades the State has spent millions of dollars to purchase the development rights on Connecticut farms, but it is currently less than half way toward its goal of 130,000A preserved farmland. This bill is a significant advance toward that goal and at no cost will continue the momentum for preserving other valuable state-owned farmland.

We thank you for raising this bill and urge you to pass it.

Tom Crider, President  
Southbury Land Trust